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E.O. 12065: GDS 02/24/88 (GAVIN, JOHN) OR-M

TAGS: EFIN, EAID, MX, XL, XK

SUBJECT: (C) CARIBBEAN BASIN INITIATIVE: PRESIDENT
LOPEZ PORTILLO'S COMMENTS TO THE AMBASSADOR

1. (C-ENTIRE TEXT).

2. SUMMARY: PRESIDENT LOPEZ PORTILLO WAS COMPLETELY
ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT PRESIDENT REAGAN'S TELEPHONE CALL
TELLING HIM THE CONTENT OF THE PRESIDENT'S CBI SPEECH.
HE PROMISED WHOLEHEARTED PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR THE INITIA-
TIVE. END SUMMARY.

3. FOLLOWING OUR DISCUSSION OF MEXICO'S DEVALUATION AND
BEFORE HE RAISED HIS TRIP TO MANAGUA (SEPTELS) DURING MY
CALL ON HIM LAST EVENING, PRESIDENT LOPEZ PORTILLO BROACHED
THE SUBJECT OF THE CBI.

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State Dept. review completed

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PAGE 002

NC 8079842

TOR: 251456Z FEB 82

4. THE PRESIDENT SAID THAT HE HAD RECEIVED A CALL FROM PRESIDENT REAGAN. I ANSWERED THAT I KNEW ABOUT THE CALL. LOPEZ PORTILLO WAS ABSOLUTELY ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT THE CBI PROGRAM. HE SAID, "THIS IS THE WAY WE CAN GET THINGS DONE. THIS TRULY OPENS THINGS UP, NOT ONLY TO HELP THESE COUNTRIES WHO SO MUCH NEED OUR ASSISTANCE BUT ALSO TO OPEN UP THE MARKETS FOR THEIR PRODUCTS." HE ADDED THAT HE UNDERSTOOD THERE WOULD BE 350 MILLION DOLLARS IN NEW FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AND SAID, "THIS TRULY BRINGS THE STATEMENTS AT CANCUN TO LIFE. THIS IS A REMARKABLE AND WONDERFUL THING."

5. I EXPRESSED MY GRATITUDE AT HIS DELIGHT, BUT ADDED THAT OF COURSE HE HAD TO REMEMBER THAT WE NEEDED SUPPORT TO GET IT THROUGH CONGRESS. I ASKED IF IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE FOR HIM TO STATE HIS ENTHUSIASM FOR THIS INITIATIVE PUBLICLY. HE AGREED WHOLEHEARTEDLY.

6. THE PRESIDENT NOTED THAT BILL MOYERS WAS TO INTERVIEW HIM THAT EVENING AND SAID, "I WISH I COULD SPEAK ABOUT THIS, BUT OF COURSE I CAN'T UNTIL TOMORROW AFTER IT HAS BEEN ANNOUNCED AND THE SPEECH HAS BEEN GIVEN." I REMARKED THAT THERE WOULD BE OTHER OPPORTUNITIES. THE PRESIDENT RESPONDED, "AND I WILL TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THEM, I PROMISE YOU."

7. COMMENT: WE OBVIOUSLY SHOULD SEIZE UPON LOPEZ PORTILLO'S WILLINGNESS TO PUBLICLY ENDORSE THE CBI AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. ONE APPROACH WOULD BE FOR ICA WASHINGTON TO PASS THIS INFORMATION PRIVATELY TO A PROMINENT AMERICAN JOURNALIST(S) AND SUGGEST THAT A REQUEST FOR AN INTERVIEW WITH LOPEZ PORTILLO WOULD PROBABLY BE GRANTED. GAVIN

END OF MESSAGE

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